

(b) whether the Government have formulated any scheme to use solar energy for irrigation purposes in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh etc;

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) the total solar energy generated in the country at present and the capacity likely to be added thereto in the near future;

(e) the details of items prepared or likely to be prepared with the solar energy; and

(f) the efforts being made to formulate a special scheme for benefit of the villagers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (CAPT. JAI NARAIN PRASAD NISHAD) : (a) Solar energy can be used through two major technology routes, solar thermal route for heating and cooling applications and solar photovoltaic (PV) route for direct generation of electricity. India is one of the leading nations in the world in the production and utilisation of solar thermal and photovoltaic products. India is the largest user of solar cookers. Surveys conducted by some independent consultants have shown India as the second largest producer of photovoltaic modules based on single crystalline silicon solar cells. During the financial year 1997-98, an amount of Rs. 58.50 crores has been provided in the central budget for this sector.

(b) and (c) Government is implementing a programme for the application of solar photovoltaic water pumping systems for agriculture and related uses. Under this scheme, which is implemented through Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency, manufacturers, suppliers and financial intermediaries can directly market solar pumps throughout the country, including the States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. The solar pumps are sold with a soft loan and subsidy arrangement. Present rate of subsidy is Rs. 125 per watt of solar photovoltaic array capacity subject to a maximum of Rs. 1,50,000. Depending on the capacity of the solar pump, a soft loan in the range of Rs. 50,000-Rs. 1,00,000 is available at 5% annual interest rate, repayable over a period of 10 years. A total of 2,159 solar PV water pumping systems have been installed under this programme.

(d) By the end of 8th Five year Plan about 28 MW of solar photovoltaic systems have been deployed. This is estimated to generate about 42 million kwh per year. About 380,000 sq. m. of solar thermal collector area for use in water heating has also been installed in the country and is estimated to save about 256 million kwh (thermal) energy per year. In addition, about 4,35,000 solar cookers, capable of saving 1.3 million LPG cylinders per year, have also been deployed.

The Ninth Five Year Plan proposals envisage deployment of 100 MW capacity of solar PV systems, 1.5

million sq. m. solar thermal collector area and 5 lakh solar cookers.

(e) Solar Energy systems currently in use based on the solar photovoltaic route include solar lanterns, street lights, domestic lights, village power plants, water pumping systems and a variety of other applications in telecommunications, railways, off-shore oil platforms, TV transmission, battery charging etc. Solar PV systems which have potential for large scale use include medical refrigerators, solar powered water desalination systems and grid connected solar power plants etc.

Solar Thermal system currently in use include solar water heaters for applications in domestic, industrial and commercial sectors, solar cookers as supplementing cooking device, solar air heaters/dryers and solar stills. Energy efficient buildings based on solar passive architecture have been demonstrated. Efforts are in progress to develop solar systems for industrial process heat and power generation. A 140 MW integrated solar combined cycle power plant with solar thermal power generation capacity of 35 MW is likely to be taken up for installation in Rajasthan.

(f) Government has formulated programmes on decentralised solar energy systems like solar lanterns, domestic lighting systems, village power plants and solar pumps primarily for the benefit of the villagers. Subsidies are provided to users of these systems.

[English]

Running of Shuttle Between Neemach and Ratlam

2491. DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether any requests have been made for starting of a shuttle between Neemach and Ratlam under Ratlam Division in Western Railway by the residents of that area;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the General Manager (W.R.) has assured for the same; and

(d) if so, the time by which it is likely to be effected?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) and (b) Some representations including from Dr. Laxminarayan Pandey, MP have been received in this regard.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Seal on Letters

2492. SHRI K. PARASURAMAN : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the complaints have been received that date and place of posting as well as receiving place have

not been clearly indicated in the postal seal or mostly the seal is missing on postal letters;

(b) whether the Government are aware that there are delays in the prompt delivery of postal letters to the addressees; and

(c) if so, the step the Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Postal Seals and Stamps invariably bear the place and date of the office of posting/delivery. However, complaints are occasionally received about non-affixing or illegible affixing of Postal Seals on Postal articles.

(b) The Postal articles are generally delivered to the addressees on time. However, occasional delays in delivery of mail may occur due to unforeseen transportation problems natural calamities, inadequacy of delivery staff, sudden and exceptionally heavy volume of mails like Corporate mail and Greeting mails etc.

(c) (i) Suitable instructions are issued from time to time to ensure proper stamping of mails. Surprise checks are made by the Senior Officers and corrective measures are taken as deemed necessary.

(ii) The transmission and delivery of mails is constantly monitored at various levels in the field and at the Headquarters also. Remedial steps are taken to curb deficiencies, wherever noticed.

Restriction of Companies

2493. SHRI SURESH KALMADI : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Department of Telecommunications has decided to restrict the number of companies with whom orders can be placed for telecom equipment instead of distributing the contracts to all the bidders as has been earlier practice;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the names of the restricted companies?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The following are the reasons:

(1) To obtain competitive and reasonable prices against tenders.

(2) To distribute the tendered quantity optimally so that orders are commercially viable both for the supplier and the purchaser i.e. Department of Telecom.

(3) The number of suppliers to be selected is invariably indicated in the bid documents for transparency in the procurement process.

(c) Only the number of companies is restricted. Restriction is not based on names. The number varies from tender to tender.

[Translation]

Introduction of Shatabdi Express Train Between Delhi and Amritsar

2494. SHRI SUKHBIR SINGH BADAL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to introduce one more Shatabdi Express Train between Delhi and Amritsar;

(b) whether an announcement was made by the Prime Minister in this regard during his Punjab tour; and

(c) if so, the time by which a final decision is likely to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) It has been decided to introduce a reverse Shatabdi Express between New Delhi and Amritsar from 02.10.97.

Renewable Energy Centres

2495. SHRI D.P. YADAV : Will the Minister of NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) the areas in Uttar Pradesh where the Government have set up renewable energy centres;

(b) the details of the projects of non-conventional energy sources which are proposed to be set up in Uttar Pradesh through Panchayats; and

(c) the details of the estimated annual expenditure thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (CAPT. JAI NARAIN PRASAD NISHAD) : (a) One Regional Training-cum R&D Centre under Integrated Rural Energy Programme, at Chinhath, Lucknow and two Biomass Production Research Centres located at National Botanical Research Institute, Lucknow and Garhal University, Srinagar respectively, have been set up with financial support from the Ministry.

(b) and (c) State Governments have been advised to involve the Panchayats in the implementation of National Programme on Improved Chulha. In turn, State Government or Uttar Pradesh has issued suitable instructions to District and Block Nodal Offices in this regard. An expenditure of